SECRET DECLASSIFIED

November 29, 1963 - Friday

We sent out last night two telegrams summarizing the situation here in regard to President Kennedy's death, as follows:

"Embassy processing as rapidly as possible thousands of letters received in connection with President Kennedy's death. More arriving each mail. Too early give accurate count but we have in hand more than 10 000 mail and wire communications from private citizens and probably twice as many British and American signatures. People still signing. Embassy has prepared black-bordered printed card containing facsimile of my signature which is sent as acknowledgment to most letters and telegrams. I am answering in longhand VIP letters and letters from diplomatic colleagues.

Money received in some letters: so far $120 for "charity"; $35 for "President Kennedy memorial"; $15 for "widow of slain policeman" and approximately $20 for unspecified use. Presume we will receive guidance with regard to the disposition of such funds as well as (a) letters addressed directly to Mrs. Kennedy; (b) condolence letters addressed to the Embassy; and (c) calling cards and 17 or more ledger-size volumes containing signatures and messages."

"Assassination of President Kennedy, hideously eliminated in Oswald murder, has produced throughout Britain deeply personal, lacerating shocks of horror, compassion, and sympathy. It has reaffirmed sense of common world aims, as well as sense of common bereavement at loss of close friend and member of family who was also leader of Western Alliance and trusted mainstay of Western security.

Magnificent bearing of Mrs. Kennedy and Kennedy family under cruel strains has evoked keenest admiration and pity in Britain. It has also helped to mitigate severity of common suffering. Surely, outpouring ofprivate grief and public sorrow over death of President and ordeal of American people has no recent precedent in British history. Americans in Britain have taken comfort from these universal expressions of sympathy and support from thousands of British citizens at all levels of British life, from Queen to humblest subject of realm.

At same time, Americans everywhere can be comforted by the generally calm, friendly and understanding way in which British public has viewed and sympathized with problems of President Johnson as he assumed heavy burdens of office under crisis-laden conditions. In fact, British commentators generally agree, President has acted with dignity, courage, discipline and firmness. He has appealed for unity and continuity in American policy at home and abroad. He has heartened his fellow countrymen and rallied spirits of America's allies. That is no small achievement, British observers insist, it shows that the American political system can rise to great heights in moments of supreme national crisis. And it is also lesson to America's friends to match President's effort and respond to his summons."

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79.

George Brown has got himself in a pickle. It seems that his television appearance on the night of the President's death was a disaster. He was called from a Labour Party dinner and appeared on short notice at the studio, where it is said there was some sort of altercation between himself and two Americans who were also to be interviewed. At any rate, there was much adverse comment on this affair, but it seems to have reached a crescendo yesterday. Brown was haled before his Party managers, and I was told that his explanation was frigidly received. One of the offenses complained of was his reference in the telecast to his close friendship with "Jack and Jackie" and their children. This was certainly not the occasion to use such terms, although it would not be almost unexpected on another type of occasion, since he is in the habit of calling everyone "Brother". I was also told that he had been instructed to write me some sort of apology. This I received under date of November 28 this morning, in these words:

"Dear Ambassador,

I feel I must write to you to say how well I understand the feelings you must have had after my television broadcast last Friday. This is not a matter on which explanations will help but I hope it will when I tell you that I have had the most miserable week of my life in consequence.

If any of my other friends were embarrassed, please tell them how I feel.

I hope to have the opportunity fairly soon of telling you personally about it.

Yours sincerely, George Brown"

I answered him in a letter marked "Personal", writing:

"My dear George:

I much appreciate your thoughtfulness in writing me about the television broadcast. Some members of my staff who saw it told me about it, but I did not see it personally. Whatever may have occurred, I am not inclined to dwell on it unduly. I know you, and I know also your deep attachment to President Kennedy. In all the circumstances, that is enough for me.

I hope to have the pleasure of lunching with you on my return from the United States in January.

With kind regards, I am

Very sincerely yours"

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I believe this is not the last we will hear of the incident.

We had a staff meeting, and during the afternoon I saw Tom Lambert of the New York Herald Tribune, who brought in his replacement, Charles Portis. He seems an affable fellow. I am sorry Tom is leaving, but gather that his new post will increase his importance with the paper.

November 30, 1963 - Saturday

I went this morning, at the invitation of the Chief Jewish Rabbi, to attend memorial services for President Kennedy at the Marble Arch Synogogue on Great Cumberland Place. It was an extraordinary ceremony. I had been told to wear a black top hat and not to remove it during the services. Almost all the congregation were in morning dress, with top hats or bowlers. The women were seated in the gallery upstairs, but there seemed to be no uniformity in the colors of their dresses, for some of them were gaily attired. With the exception of myself, all the male members of the congregation wore long white scarves.

I have never heard such fine chanting. Fortunately, I was seated next to the Israeli Ambassador, who kept me apprised of what was going on in the ritual. I tried to follow the proceedings in the English translation, but hopelessly bogged down. Lay members conducted portions of it. Sir Isaac Wolfson, the great philanthropist and financier, intoned his assignment [redacted] effectively for about 15 minutes. The Chief Rabbi's sermon was delivered in English. I was moved and fascinated by the proceedings, which lasted for over two hours. We lunched at home, and Stash Radziwill came in to have coffee and a conversation with us. Lee is going to stay with her sister until the latter part of March. Averell Harriman has lent Jackie his house in Georgetown, and she will remain there until she goes to Palm Beach. He thinks she will buy a place in Georgetown.

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8P.

This is Sir Winston Churchill's 89th birthday, and I sent him a telegram of congratulations.

I went for a short time to the office this morning, but devoted most of the afternoon to writing a telegram to the Department about the effect here of the President's death and the reception of his successor's excellent take-over speech.

December 1, 1963 - Sunday

I went to the office this morning, and sent off the following telegram:

Stash came to lunch, and the three of us went to St. Paul's Cathedral, where we arrived at 2:40. The Cabinet members had preceded us to their places. The interior, seating 2800 people, was completely filled, and there were many persons standing outdoors who could hear the service over loud speakers, and join in the singing.

The exactitude with which the British conduct their great ceremonies is wonderful. All one has to do is to take one's proper place in the stream and be swept along. The following is an example of the meticulous planning customary on such occasions.

That good man, who looks like a true Prince of the Church, the Archbishop of Canterbury, dominated the ecclesiastical side of the commemoration.

Randolph Churchill had accompanied his mother to the Catnedral, but left her to return home with Stash and ourselves. We spent a long time together this afternoon, talking about the President, with the contribution of many attractive anecdotes by Radziwill.

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